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PROSECUTOR ON IMAM'S DEATH:

'COLD-BLOODED ... ASSASSINATION'

Brooklyn man, 35, charged with murder in killing of Queens imam and assistant that horrified Bangladeshi community. 2

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3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

FBI TO GIVE CONGRESS REPORT ON LACK OF CHARGES ON CLINTON

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The FBI on Tuesday will deliver a report to U.S. lawmakers explaining why the law enforcement agency did not recommend charges over Hillary Clinton's use of a personal email server, CNN reported, citing U.S. officials briefed on the matter. The confidential material, which will include FBI agent memos on their interviews with the U.S. Democratic presidential candidate, is classified and cannot be made public, according to CNN. REUTERS

RUSSIA USES IRAN AS BASE TO BOMB SYRIAN MILITANTS FOR FIRST TIME

Russia used Iran as a base from which to launch air strikes against Syrian militants for the first time on Tuesday, widening its air campaign in Syria and deepening its involvement in the Middle East. In a move underscoring Moscow's increasingly close ties with Tehran, long-range Russian Tupolev-22M3 bombers and Sukhoi-34 fighter bombers used Iran's Hamadan air base to strike a range of targets in Syria. It was the first time Russia has used the territory of another nation, apart from Syria itself, to launch such strikes since the Kremlin launched a bombing campaign to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in September last year. It was also thought to be the first time that Iran has allowed a foreign power to use its territory for military operations since the 1979 Islamic revolution. REUTERS

FED OFFICIALS EYE US INTEREST RATE HIKE

ISTOCK

The Federal Reserve is raising expectations for an interest rate rise this year, even as early as next month, after two policymakers on Tuesday said the economic stars now appear to be aligning despite weak U.S. economic growth in the first half of 2016. New York Fed President William Dudley said "it's possible" to raise rates at the Sept. 20-21 policy meeting given evidence of wage gains and a tighter labor market that could boost inflation, while Dennis Lockhart of the Atlanta Fed said a hike next month is in play. The comments, which prompted investors to boost bets on a rate hike, came nine days before the annual meeting of some of the world's top central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, a venue the Fed often uses to telegraph policy plans. REUTERS

No bail for Morel in imam's slaying

The 35-year-old suspect admits he was at the scene of the killings before the shootings but denies he was the gunman.

Muslims gather outside of the Al-Furqan Jame Masjid where the Imam Maulama Akonjee and Thara Uddin were killed in a shooting on Aug. 13. Oscar Morel, below, has been charged with the crime. . GETTY IMAGES

A Brooklyn man appeared in court on Tuesday and denied killing a Muslim cleric and his assistant on a street in Queens last Saturday.

Oscar Morel, 35, faces up to life in prison without parole if he is convicted of killing Imam Maulama Akonjee, 55, and Thara Uddin, 64, in a brazen daylight attack on Saturday that horrified the neighborhood's Bangladeshi community.

Morel, who was shackled at the hands and feet and wore a tan button-down shirt with black pants, was arraigned at Queens Criminal Court on one count of first-degree murder, two counts of second-degree murder and two counts of second-degree criminal possession of a weapon.

"It's the most horrendous and despicable act that can only be described as a cold-blooded and premeditated assassination," prosecutor Peter McCormack told the court as relatives of the victims looked on.

"The defendant ran up behind both of them and pumped numerous bullets into them striking them both in the head ... leaving them lying in the street mortally wounded," he said.

Authorities said on Tuesday that the suspect's motive remained unclear, and the possibility it was a hate crime was one theory being explored.

Morel appeared calm and spoke little during his brief appearance. He agreed that surveillance video showed him at the scene of the murders earlier on Saturday, but denied being the killer.

Judge Karen Gopee set his next court date for Thursday, when an attorney will be assigned to represent him.

Speaking to reporters at the court, Uddin's brother, Mashuk Uddin, said the families of both victims were devastated.

"Everybody is very upset," Uddin said, adding that he believes it was a hate crime. "These two people here being killed at one time? What's the reason? There's only one reason [and] that's the hate crime."

"Preliminarily, [police] don't have a motive for the shooting," a law enforcement source told the New York Post. "They don't know what it's about. … They know it was a hit; the guy came up from behind and shot them. But they don't have a motive."

Morel allegedly admitted to being in the area at the time of the shooting, but insisted to police, "I did not shoot the guy," the Post reported.

"We can't explain why he was there," Boyce said. But "he was [at the scene] approximately eight minutes before the homicide."

The suspect's brother, Alvin Morel, said his brother is "a decent person" and "this is nothing like him."

"The only time we felt, everybody in New York felt, a hatred, was during 9/11," Alvin Morel said, the New York Daily News reported. "Other than that, we never felt a hatred with nobody."

The Daily News also reported that Alvin Morel posted "I can't believe what has happened. … GOD help my brother mother father and myself" on Facebook.

The brother said his parents are deeply affected because the family is Catholic and their mom has cancer.

Outside court, several relatives of the dead men as well as friends and locals held signs reading "We demand justice."

Morel moved into the East New York, Brooklyn, apartment about seven months ago, his landlord told police.

"He had a girlfriend, but he lives alone, he was always very nice. He told me he works cleaning in a school," 59-year-old Amado Baptista told the Daily News. REUTERS; KIMBERLY M. AQUILINA CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT.

Caught on camera

Robert Boyce, the New York Police Department's chief of detectives, told a news conference on Monday that surveillance video showed the suspect getting into a black sport utility vehicle after the shootings.

That vehicle was involved in a hit and run three miles away in Brooklyn shortly afterward. After officers located the SUV, the suspect rammed a detective's car several times in an attempt to escape, but was arrested, Boyce said.

Citing unnamed police sources, the New York Times, The New York Daily News and other outlets reported on Tuesday that detectives who searched Morel's basement apartment in Brooklyn found an unlicensed revolver hidden in a wall that authorities believe he used in the execution-style killings.

Police also found clothes in his apartment that matched what the gunman had been wearing, according to the media reports.

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NYC neighborhoods sprayed for mosquitoes as Zika count rises

De Blasio pleads with Congress to OK funding to combat Zika as number of cases in city rises to 489.

JASON NUCKOLLS
@MetroNewYork
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New York officials make efforts similar to these of a Texas health inspector to spray for mosquitoes in the city. GETTY IMAGES

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene officials have been spraying various Manhattan and Queens neighborhoods this week in an effort to kill mosquitoes and reduce residents' possible exposure to the Zika and West Nile viruses.

From 10 p.m. on Wednesday and ending at 6 a.m. today, the city sprayed the neighborhoods of Fort George, Inwood, Sherman Creek, Sugar Hill and Washington Heights in Manhattan, according to the Health Department.

Simultaneously in Queens, Auburndale, Bayside, Corona, Flushing, Fresh Meadows, Murray Hill, Pomonok and Queensboro Hill received the same treatment.

The city sprayed adulticide to reduce Asian tiger mosquitoes, which have been found in significant numbers in Health Department traps in the specific areas receiving Wednesday's treatment, ABC7 reported.

49
NYC PREGNANT WOMEN INFECTED

489
TOTAL NYC PEOPLE INFECTED

While the Zika virus has not been found in any NYC mosquito, an insect that is an evolutionary cousin to the Asian tiger mosquito has been to blame for the current Zika outbreak.

"Though the mosquito carrying Zika has not been identified here, nearly a quarter of all positive cases in the continental United States are in New York," Mayor Bill de Blasio said. "As a global city, we must continue to act aggressively with the full support of our federal government, and we hope the other cities will adhere to this model."

In the New York area, most people who tested positive for Zika acquired the infection from mosquitoes in Zika-affected regions, and four contracted it from sexual transmission, the mayor's office stated. Wednesday's scheduled pesticide spraying will be the city's fifth such treatment in a mosquito-dense area.

In the event of bad weather, the pesticide treatment will begin on Thursday, ABC7 added.

At a Tuesday news conference, Mayor Bill de Blasio urged congressional leaders to approve $1.9 billion in funding to combat Zika's spread, saying, "We need federal help so badly. We need the federal government to protect the people of New York City and the entire country," the New York Daily News reported.

During the current Zika outbreak, 489 people have been diagnosed with the virus in New York City — including 49 pregnant women, the Daily News stated. One child has been born in the city with microcephaly, the birth defect marked by babies born with abnormally small heads, which is caused by Zika.

> *"As a global city, we must continue to act aggressively with the full support of our federal government, and we hope the other cities will adhere to this model."*
>
> de Blasio

MTA ATTACK

Man allegedly tries to set subway booth on fire during failed robbery

A Brooklyn man is under arrest after he allegedly tried to set fire to a subway booth during a failed robbery attempt in Crown Heights Friday night.

Everette Robinson, 51, of St. Mark's Avenue, allegedly doused the teller's booth on the No. 3 line at Nostrand Avenue with gasoline through the small opening under the glass and demanded money.

"He said that if I didn't give him the money, he would light me up," MTA worker Percillia Augustine-Soverall, 44, told the Daily News.

She told the paper that the man then lit a rag or T-shirt soaked in gasoline, apparently intending to ignite the booth.

An automated system designed to detect hazardous materials prevented it, covering the booth in an inflammable white foam. A passerby knocked the flaming rag out of the man's hands, prompting him to flee.

CHRIS CAESAR

This week's weather is great — for tropical plants

A man cools off in a Washington Square Park fountain on Monday when the heat index reached 100 degrees. The high Wednesday should top 90 and no relief is in sight from the heat and the humidity until early next week.

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Gurley PROVIDED

The housing complex in which Gurley was shot FILE PHOTO

Liang, left, in court GETTY IMAGES

NYC to pay $4.5M to settle Akai Gurley shooting lawsuit

The city, NYCHA and the officer who shot Gurley, Peter Liang, will all have to pay into the total sum.

The city of New York has settled for $4.5 million a lawsuit over the 2014 police killing of an unarmed black man in an unlit stairwell that sparked demonstrations around the city, officials said.

The settlement comes amid a wave of angry protests that have roiled the United States over the past two years in response to high-profile police killings of unarmed black men, with the most recent killing in Milwaukee resulting in riots. Police say that man was armed.

Akai Gurley, 28, was killed on the night of Nov. 20, 2014, when Officer Peter Liang, patrolling a Brooklyn housing project with his partner, fired his gun once.

The bullet ricocheted off a wall to a stairwell one floor below, where it struck Gurley in the chest. Liang said he fired the shot accidentally.

The city of New York will pay $4.1 million while the New York City Housing Authority and Liang will pay a combined $425,000 to settle the lawsuit, according to the New York City Law Department.

"We believe this is a fair resolution of a tragic matter," a law department spokesman said in an emailed statement.

Liang was convicted of manslaughter in the shooting in February, but State Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun reduced the count to the lesser felony of criminally negligent homicide, finding prosecutors failed to prove Liang "consciously disregarded" the risk of causing another person's death.

Chun sentenced Liang to 800 hours of community service, triggering demonstrations outside the Brooklyn courthouse by protesters who said the sentence was too light.

Liang, a rookie, was on patrol inside a Brooklyn public housing project with his partner and drew his gun upon entering a pitch-black stairwell.

At trial, Liang testified that a sudden noise startled him, causing his finger to slip onto the trigger and fire. Only after coming downstairs, he said, did he realize that the errant bullet had hit Gurley.

Liang's partner, Shaun Landau, was fired in February less than 24 hours after Liang was found guilty.

Gurley's domestic partner, Kimberly Ballinger, filed the lawsuit in Brooklyn state court in May.

The lawsuit said Liang acted "negligently and recklessly" and the two officers failed to summon medical help promptly. The suit also faulted the housing authority for failing to illuminate the stairwell properly, contributing to the shooting. REUTERS

The corner of Flatbush and Sixth Avenue in Brooklyn GOOGLE MAPS

NYPD: Off-duty officer shoots attempted robber in Park Slope

An off-duty NYPD officer leaving a Brooklyn eatery was confronted by a would-be robber who was shot by the cop in a scuffle on the street.

Early Monday morning, the officer was near the corner of Flatbush and Sixth Avenue in Park Slope when a man approached and tried to rob him, NY1 reported.

The two engaged in a dispute outside Bleachers Restaurant, where the officer had just left, ABC7 reported.

A shot was fired during the confrontation, which ended with the suspect being transported to Methodist Hospital in stable condition.

The suspect was in custody and charges were pending, ABC7 added.

It remained unclear if he was shot with the officer's weapon or his own gun.

JASON NUCKOLLS

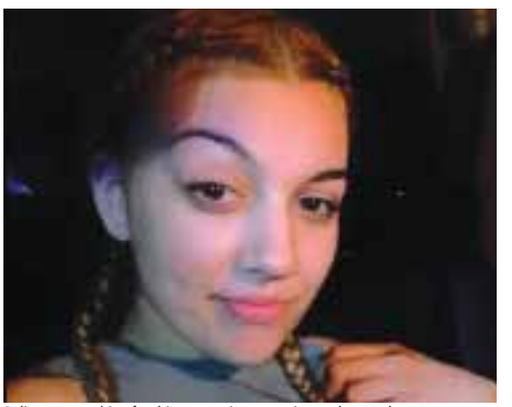
Woman wanted in Bronx teen stabbing

Police are looking for a woman named "Snow" who allegedly walked up to a teen on a Bronx street and slashed her several times before fleeing.

On Monday, July 18, around 1:20 a.m., an 18-year-old woman was walking on Pugsley Avenue when she was approached from behind by another woman, police reported. The woman, whom the victim didn't know, slashed her several times in the shoulder, forearm and cheek before stabbing her in the stomach.

The suspect then ran southbound on Pugsley Avenue. Authorities transported the victim to Jacobi Hospital where she has since been released.

Officials described the suspect as a Hispanic woman approximately 5-foot-3 and 110 pounds with brown eyes and short blond hair in a bun. Known by the name "Snow," she was last seen wearing a pink T-shirt.



Police are searching for this woman in connection to the attack. PROVIDED

Anyone with information should call the NYPD Crime Stoppers hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS or, for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA. The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers website at NYPDCrimeStoppers.com.

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BRIEF

German man arrested on suspicion of selling gun to Munich shooter

Police on Tuesday arrested an armed 31-year-old German man who boasted during a sting operation that he had supplied the Glock 17 pistol used by a gunman who killed nine people in Munich on July 22, the Frankfurt state prosecutor said in a statement.

Authorities arrested the man, who was not named, in Marburg, after contacting him on the so-called dark net and posing as buyers for an automatic weapon and another Glock 17 pistol for $9,021, it said.

The man's claims were supported by evidence gathered by the Munich prosecutor's office and Bavarian state police, the statement said.

"There is the strong suspicion that the 31-year-old man sold the Glock 17 used in the Munich shooting to the 18-year-old German-Iranian shortly before the attacks," the Bavarian state police said in a separate statement.

The Frankfurt prosecutor's office said the suspect was identified during unrelated investigations into illegal weapons purchases by a 62-year-old accountant and a 17-year-old student. REUTERS

Clinton names Obama veterans to White House transition team

Four co-chairs were named.

Clinton GETTY IMAGES

Looking to lay the groundwork for her presidency if she wins the White House in November, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton named several veterans of President Barack Obama's administration for her transition team on Tuesday.

Ken Salazar, a former interior secretary and senator from Colorado, will lead a team of four co-chairs including one-time national security adviser Tom Donilon and Neera Tanden, a former Obama aide who now leads the progressive Center for American Progress think-tank, the Clinton campaign said.

The other co-chairs are former Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm and Maggie Williams, director of Harvard's Institute of Politics, the campaign said in a statement.

The announcement came as Clinton has gained momentum in the opinion polls against Republican rival Donald Trump, whose campaign has struggled after he made a string of controversial remarks since formally winning his party's nomination last month.

Clinton has been a former secretary of state, senator and first lady and her transition team includes old names from her long tenure in Washington, some of whom have also served Obama.

Tanden, who played a key role in shaping Obama's health care overhaul, is a longtime friend and adviser to Clinton who worked on her Senate campaign. Williams was the 1992 transition director for Clinton when she became first lady, and then her chief of staff in the White House when Bill Clinton was president.

Two policy advisers on the campaign, Ed Meier and Ann O'Leary, will also move full time to the transition team.

Heather Boushey, the executive director of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, will be the chief economist, the campaign said in a statement. Boushey has advised the campaign on economic policy.

Transition teams oversee personnel appointments and help develop an administrative framework during the period between the November election and the inauguration in January, to make it easier for a new president to begin implementing policy agendas. REUTERS

Poll: Clinton has 6 point lead over Trump

Hillary Clinton has a 6 percentage point lead over Republican rival Donald Trump, according to a Reuters/Ipsos tracking poll released on Tuesday.

Clinton's support has ranged from 41 percent to 44 percent since late July, and was about 41 percent in the Aug. 11-15 online poll.

Trump's support has experienced wider shifts ranging from 33 percent to 39 percent while his campaign has endured controversies and distractions in recent weeks. He is favored by about 35 percent of likely voters, according to the most recent poll. REUTERS

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BEAR HUNT

Canada officials may charge US hunter who speared bear to death

Alberta may file charges against a U.S. hunter who posted a video of himself killing a black bear with a spear, wildlife officials said Tuesday, as the Canadian province moved to ban spear hunting.

The video, which sparked outrage online, shows hunter Josh Bowmar baiting a trap for the bear in a wooded area and then impaling the animal with a long spear with a camera attached to it.

Bowmar, 26, defended the way he killed the bear, while Alberta Environment Ministry spokesman Kyle Ferguson described the hunt as "unacceptable" and "archaic."

"We will introduce a ban on spear hunting this fall," Ferguson said. "In the meantime, we have asked Fish and Wildlife officers to investigate this incident to determine if charges are warranted under existing laws."

Bowmar, a javelin thrower and hunter, uploaded the video in June, local media reported. It appears to have been taken down, but has since been uploaded onto other YouTube accounts.

"I drilled him perfect," Bowmar jubilantly tells the camera. "That was the longest throw I ever thought I could ever make."

Bowmar runs an Ohio-based fitness company and was a university athlete, according to the business' website.

The killing was ethical, and "no one cares more about these animals than us hunters," Bowmar told Reuters in an email. He estimated the bear ran 60 yards (55 meters), then died. He argued that a spear is a more humane weapon than a bow.

In a response to a comment on her Facebook page, Bowmar's wife, Sarah, said on Monday her husband's critics have "nothing better to do." REUTERS

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Prosecutors will not receive funding to go after medical marijuana sales if permissible under state guidelines. ISTOCK

Prosecutors dealt setback over medical marijuana

The U.S. Department of Justice cannot spend money to prosecute federal marijuana cases if the defendants comply with state guidelines that permit the drug's sale for medical purposes, a federal appeals court ruled Tuesday.

The ruling, from the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, comes as voters in nine more states will consider allowing the recreational use of marijuana this November.

Twenty-five U.S. states allow for medical marijuana. While the sale of the drug is still illegal under federal law, Congress in 2014 passed a budget rule that prohibits the DOJ from using federal funds to interfere in the implementation of state marijuana regulations.

Due to this rule, defendants in 10 cases in California and Washington argued that their federal charges should be dismissed. The Ninth Circuit in San Francisco, which covers nine Western states, ruled Tuesday that the DOJ could not spend money as long as those defendants "strictly complied" with all state regulations.

The appeals court sent the cases back to lower courts to determine if the defendants had complied with state law.

In November, California and eight other states will consider whether to allow marijuana for recreational use. Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Alaska, as well as the District of Columbia, already permit it.

The unanimous ruling Tuesday was issued by a three-judge panel, two of whom are Republican appointees with a history of pro-law enforcement opinions.

Despite the outcome, however, Judge Diarmuid O'Scannlain wrote that medical marijuana purveyors should not feel immune from federal law.

"Congress could restore funding tomorrow, a year from now or four years from now," he wrote, "and the government could then prosecute individuals who committed offenses while the government lacked funding." REUTERS

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A man navigates a boat of rescued goats past a partially submerged car after flooding in Gonzales, Louisiana. GETTY IMAGES

Nine dead, thousands of homes ravaged in Louisiana floods

Storm broke records for a 24-hour rainfall.

Search-and-rescue operations were still underway on Tuesday in Louisiana, where at least nine people have died in flooding that damaged about 40,000 homes, state officials said.

Emergency crews have already plucked more than 20,000 people and 1,000 pets to safety from flooded areas after a storm that broke records for 24-hour rainfall in multiple locations, Gov. John Bel Edwards told reporters in Baton Rouge.

Rain-swollen rivers are receding in much of the state, but some communities in southern Louisiana are bracing for waters that have not yet crested, according to national forecasters.

More than 8,000 people slept in emergency shelters on Monday night, unable to return to their homes, Edwards told a news conference. The state planned to impose curfews on Tuesday night in the parishes with widespread damage.

"This is a historic flooding event," Edwards said of the unnamed storm. "It's unprecedented."

The storm dumped more than 2.5 feet of rain on an area near Watson, Louisiana, from Thursday to Monday morning, the highest total reported, according to the National Weather Service.

In Abbeville, Louisiana, a 125-year-old record for 24-hour rainfall was shattered by 16.38 inches of rain from Friday to Saturday, the weather service reported.

The flooding prompted President Barack Obama to issue a disaster declaration on Sunday, with additional parishes given approval on Tuesday to be eligible for the federal assistance.

Already, 40,000 residents have registered for disaster aid, Edwards said.

Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, told reporters the "very large disaster" was affecting more people than flooding in March that left at least four dead and thousands of homes damaged in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Louisiana will mark the 11th anniversary later this month of Hurricane Katrina, which killed more than 1,800 people when floods overwhelmed levees and broke through flood walls protecting New Orleans on Aug. 29, 2005.

The state's death toll from the latest inundation rose to nine on Tuesday with the discovery of a 58-year-old man's body near his home in East Baton Rouge Parish. The man died of an accidental drowning, parish coroner Dr. Beau Clark said in a phone interview.

In Tangipahoa Parish, authorities believe that a 20-year-old woman found inside her car was killed after her vehicle was washed right off the road, leaving it completely submerged.

A 59-year-old man who died in the same parish appeared to have been swept away by rushing floodwaters.

Many in Louisiana are trying to reach friends and relatives displaced by the storm, the governor acknowledged, noting that most were likely safe but without communications.

"We understand that there are a lot of people who are suffering," Edwards said. REUTERS

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Apple to increase investment in increasingly tough China

Apple Inc. will boost its investment in China, one of its most important but increasingly difficult markets, and build its first Asia-Pacific research and development center in the country, Chief Executive Tim Cook said on Tuesday.

Demand for Apple's phones has plummeted in China, and the government maintains a wary attitude toward foreign technology. This is at least the CEO's second trip to the country in four months.

Apple's new research and development center will be built by the end of the year, Cook told Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli, one of China's most senior officials, according to the official Chinese state broadcaster.

The pledge comes after the head of China's industry and technology regulator in May told Cook he hoped Apple could deepen its cooperation with the country in research and development and stressed information security.

Apple GETTY IMAGES

Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Sales in Greater China, once touted as Apple's next growth engine, decreased by a third in its most recent quarterly results, after having more than doubled a year earlier.

Not only is a slowdown of the world's second-largest economy stoking concerns, but the company's stores for books and movies also went dark in China earlier this year. Apple has also lost intellectual property battles and faced anti-U.S. sentiment from consumers.

Before Cook's charm offensive in Beijing in May, Apple announced a $1 billion deal with ride-hailing app Didi Chuxing, a move many experts saw as an attempt to curry favor with Beijing.

Other tech firms have in the past pledged investment in China while facing difficulties in the country, including Microsoft Corp (MSFT.O) and Qualcomm Inc (QCOM.O), but often with mixed results.

REUTERS

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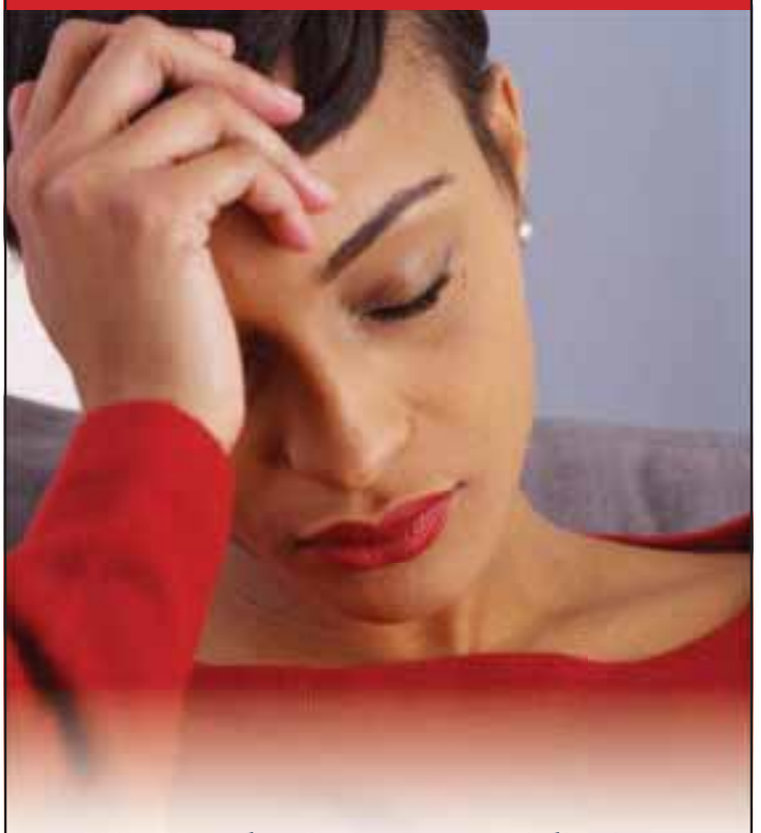

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Knock, knock! Google Duo video call is here

Now, all you need is a phone number to start a video call with any contact who uses an Android- or iOS-based smartphone.

Google on Tuesday launched Google Duo, pitting it directly against Apple Inc's (AAPL.O) FaceTime, which allows video calls only between Apple devices.

Duo will also compete with Microsoft Corp's (MSFT.O) video-calling app Skype, Facebook Inc's (FB.O) Messenger and even its own Hangout app.

Duo comes with a unique feature called "knock knock", which lets a person to see live video of a caller before answering.

Google said video calls would work even on slower networks by "gracefully" reducing the resolution to keep the call going smoothly.

"For video calls on the go, Duo will switch between Wi-Fi and cellular data automatically without dropping your call," Justin Uberti, principal software engineer, wrote in a blog post.

Google, owned by Alphabet Inc (GOOGL.O), said the app would be live worldwide in the next few days. REUTERS

Google Duo allows Android or iOS-based software to video call. ISTOCK

Indian messaging platform Hike raises $175 million

Indian messaging startup Hike Messenger has raised more than $175 million in a funding round led by Tencent Holdings Limited and Foxconn Technology Group that values the company at nearly $1.4 billion.

The company, which bills itself as India's only homegrown messaging platform, has so far raised $250 million overall in four rounds of investment, the fourth being the highest, the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

Its existing investors SoftBank Group, Bharti Enterprises and Tiger Global also participated in the fourth round.

The homegrown messaging platform has 100 million users in India out of which 95 percent are Indians. "Hike users, on an average, exchange 40 billion messages per month and spend 120 minutes per user per week on the platform," the company said in the statement.

"The new fund raise is going to allow us to push Hike to greater heights and invest in areas that will be key to our long term vision and success," said Kavin Bharti Mittal, founder and chief executive of Hike.

Its biggest competitor in India is Facebook Inc owned WhatsApp. REUTERS

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Knee Pain Screenings Offered To Help Determine If New York Metro Area Residents Qualify For Popular Treatment

Knee pain sufferers have limited time to claim knee pain screening to see if all-natural knee arthritis treatment might work for them

If you qualify for this treatment, it might be one of the happiest days of your life.

That's because, for the past year and a half, hundreds of knee pain sufferers have flocked to ***NY Pain MD*** New York City.

That's when their specially trained-doctors added Hyalgan treatments to their already successful comprehensive knee pain relief program.

Viscosupplementation is unique because - even-though it is manufactured by a pharmaceutical company, it is NOT considered a drug because it is a natural substance with an incredible story.

Why So Many Want It

You see, when you suffer with arthritis - the lubricating fluid (synovial fluid) in your knee joint dries up.

This means instead of gliding smoothly - your bones start to rub and grind against each other.

This causes a little pain in the beginning - but over time the pain steadily gets worse until it is excruciating.

Like "Joint Oil"

Viscosupplementation works so well because it is like 'joint oil." It is a natural substance that contains one of the natural building blocks of the synovial fluid that lubricates your knee.

Scientists and researchers discovered this natural building block to synovial fluid in the rooster's comb - that big red thing on top of the roosters head. It is extracted from the roosters comb, purified and concentrated. They have also developed medical lubricants that are also natural but made a bit like yogurt and "cultured" into highly effective arthritis pain-fighting medical lubricants.

When introduced directly into your knee joint, it is like squirting oil on a rusty door hinge.

Viscosupplementation allows your joints to glide more smoothly eliminating a lot of the rubbing, grinding and pain.

Can Supplements Do The Same Thing?

No. Glucosamine and chondroitin and other supplements are much different. You can only get this from a doctor and it often helps knee pain sufferers who got limited or no success from glucosamine and chondroitin. Beware of unsubstantiated claims made by supplements to do what this advanced medical procedure does.

Why You Should Try This Even If You've Already Had Similar Treatments Without Results...

"We have been able to help so many knee pain sufferers - even many who have already tried other treatments like Synvisc, Supartz, Orthovisc and even Hyalgan. This is because our treating doctors always use ***"Precision Arthritis Targeting Technology".*** *This allows us to place the Viscosupplementation exactly where is needs to be. Studies show doctors doing joint injections without technology can miss the joint up to 30% of the time."* noted the Director of Center

NY Pain MD is a state of the art medical facility offering only the best technology.

And that's not all :

"Every case is individual. Some patients get quite a bit of relief right away - others take a little more time. But most have been extremely happy. We've noted results lasting no less than 6 months for many but up to 2 years for some patients.. Patients who were suffering for years with bad knee pain are getting their lives back... going for walks again and exercising. It's amazing to see. They tell all their friends - that's why we are swarmed. After getting treatment and feeling better, many patients have decided to cancel their total knee replacement surgeries." added the director.

How To Find Out If It Can HelpYou?

If you have knee pain, the ***NY Pain MD*** doctors would like to invite you for a no-obligation screening to see if you are a candidate for their treatments using *Precision Arthritis Targeting Technology.*

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Advanced Medical Technology Can Make All The Difference: This advanced Precision Arthritis Targeting Technology using fluorososcopic imaging allows doctors to see directly into the knee joint so treatments are precise and the FDA approved lubricating medicine actually goes EXACLTY where it is supposed to. Studies show that procedures done without this technology can miss the joint up to 30% of the time. This is one reason Viscosupplementation may not have worked for you in the past. *NY Pain MD* uses this P.A.T. Imaging Technology. with each and every treatment.

All you have to do is call 800-227-KNEE (5633) right now and when the scheduling specialist answers the phone tell her you would like your no obligation "Knee Pain Screening." The doctors at ***NY Pain MD*** can only accept a limited amount of new patients each month for this screening - so if you are interested please call now. Your no obligation screening will only take about 25-30 minutes... you will get all your questions answered and leave knowing if you have possibly found the solution to your knee pain.

And here's something really important - Viscosupplementation treatments are covered by most insurance, union plans and even medicare. To schedule your no obligation screening or if you have any questions:

Call: 800 227 KNEE

Are You Qualified For Knee Arthritis Screening With *NYC Pain MD?*

- **Do you have pain and osteoarthritis (arthritis) of the knee?**
- **Have you tried other treatments such as NSAIDS and other anti-inflamatory medications without success?**
- **Have you already tried viscosupplementation (Hyalgan, Suparz, Synvisc) without satisfactory results?**

If you answered yes to any of these questions - give *NY Pain MD* a call and schedule your no obligation knee pain screening

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Baby Boomers May Avoid Knee Surgery With Modern Arthritis Treatments

Doctors say these two factors are the keys to knee arthritis treatment success and relieving pain without surgery

By Matt Edgar

America's Health Writer

New York City - Everyone has said it at one time or another. If I had only known about "this" sooner - things would be very different today.

That's what many knee arthritis pain sufferers are saying about this technology and treatment.

"We all know that countless lives are being saved every year because of early detection and better treatment" noted the clinic director at the ***NY Pain MD*** in New York City. "*The same holds true for treating arthritis pain. I believe we are having so much success at* ***NY Pain MD*** *because of two factors: One is we are using advanced medical technology and treatments a lot of clinics do not use. And second, the word has spread to our community and so many knee arthritis sufferers are coming in sooner. And the earlier we can treat knee arthritis - the better the results. The key to trying to avoid knee replacement surgery is doing the correct treatment as soon as possibly"*

What is the "correct treatment?"

"That depends," said the director. *"There is no one answer when it comes to medical conditions. Knee arthritis is no different. That's why, if you have knee pain, you should have it evaluated by a doctor who deals with and treats knee pain every day,"* added the director.

For many knee arthritis pain sufferers the right treatment is Viscosupplementation whereby a preparation of Hyaluronic acid a gel-like FDA approved medicine is applied directly into the knee joint using *Precision Arthritis Targeting Technology.*

Hyaluronic acid is the natural lubricant and shock absorber of your joints and is found to be decreased in arthritis sufferers. This is similar to running your without oil. Obviously, the sooner you put oil back in the car - the less damage will be done. That's why some doctors feel early viscosupplecosupplementation gets the best results and is so important for avoiding surgery.

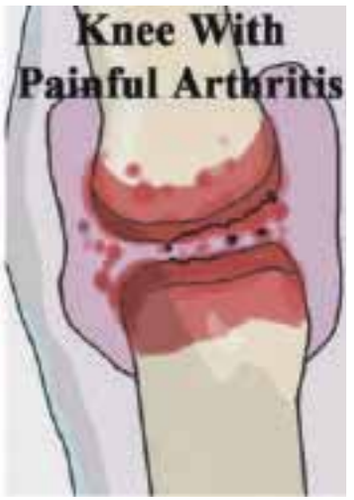
The director believes one of the most important factors for the success of viscosupplementation is making sure you are getting it into the joint space precisely. That's why the doctors at ***NY Pain MD*** use advanced imaging technology to apply *Precision Arthritis Targetin*g during every treatment.

A device called the "C-Arm" allows the doctor to see into the joint and actually watch the medicine be applied exactly where it is supposed to. Research shows that performing procedures without Precision Arthritis Targeting (P.A.T.T.)can result in missing the joint space as much as 30% of the time. If you had viscosupplementation treatments without Presision Arthritis Targeting Technology and did not get good results - this may be why.

"If you have knee arthritis pain, viscosupplementation might be the answer you are looking for. The keys are to not wait, get a good evaluation from an expert and make sure precision arthritis targeting is used to make sure you have the best chance for success."

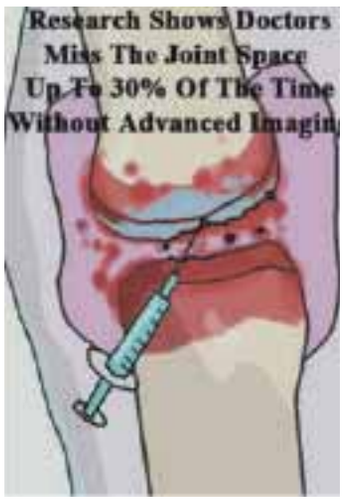
Can This Be Avoided? Total knee replacement is serious surgery requiring months of rehabilitation. Some doctors think modern treatments done early enough can keep baby boomers from going under the knife.

Everyone Wants Proof: In the artist simulated drawings above, picture #1 is a normal, pain-free knee. There is no arthritis and the knee can move and bend freely without pain.



Pain - The red is a knee joint with painful osteoarthritis. With progressive "drying out", arthritis causes the joint space to decrease and an array of symptoms which may include grinding, stiffness, decreased motion, bone spurs, swelling and a lot of pain.

Successful Treatment - Treatment (blue) being applied directly into the knee joint using Precision Arthritis Targeting Technology. Advanced imaging allows treatments to be as precise as possible. Viscosupplementation can lubricate the joint and decrease pain.



Failed Treatment - the medicine misses the joint space. Research shows this occurs up to 30% of the time without the use of Precision Arthritis Targeting Technology to guide the injection. This is why prior treatment may not have worked for you.

US seeking help south of the border amid rise in Asian, African migrants

Many migrants are coming up to the U.S. from Central and Latin America.

6K

6,342 ASIAN, AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN MIGRANTS HAVE BEEN CAUGHT TRYING TO ENTER MEXICO

Washington is seeking closer coordination with several Latin American countries to tackle a jump in migrants from Asia, Africa and the Middle East who it believes are trying to reach the United States from the south on an arduous route by plane, boat and through jungle on foot.

U.S. agents deployed to an immigration facility on Mexico's southern border have vetted the more than 640 migrants from countries outside the Americas who have been detained at the center since October 2015, according to U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) documents reviewed by Reuters.

The migrants often fly to Brazil, obtain fake passports there, and are smuggled to Panama before heading through Central America to Mexico's porous southern border, according to transcripts of 14 interviews conducted at the center and other internal briefing documents seen by Reuters.

The U.S. agents' findings come as Mexican immigration data show 6,342 Asian, African and Middle Eastern migrants were apprehended trying to enter Mexico in the first six months of this year. That was up from 4,261 in all of 2015, and 1,831 in 2014.

U.S. border apprehensions point to the same trend. Between October 2015 and May 2016, U.S. agents apprehended 5,350 African and Asian migrants at the U.S. Southwest border. That's up from 6,126 in all of fiscal year 2015 and 4,172 in all of fiscal year 2014.

U.S. concerns about potential security risks from migrants using the unusual and circuitous southern route have been growing in recent years, following a string of Islamic State-inspired attacks in the West and the surge in Syrian refugees fleeing that country's civil war.

Five Syrian nationals detained in Honduras last November were part of a wider group of seven Syrians who acquired forged passports in Brazil and then went by land to Argentina on their way north, a U.S. government source familiar with that case said. There was no evidence to suggest the men were militants.

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Migrants from Haiti and African countries have sought asylum in the U.S. at the San Isidro Port of Entry in Tijuana. GETTY IMAGES

"The reality is that the vast majority of the people that Mexico encounters that are extra-continental will eventually end up on our border," a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) official said.

At the detention camp in Tapachula, near Mexico's border with Guatemala, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents have been training their Mexican counterparts on interview techniques, and using U.S. criminal databases to investigate detainees, according to internal documents seen by Reuters.

Two to three U.S. agents have been stationed there since at least October, according to the documents and U.S. officials. Mexican officials have previously acknowledged the presence of U.S. agents at Mexico's southern border, but few details of the cooperation have been reported. REUTERS

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Amber Heard and Johnny Depp settle for $7 million

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

And after all that, it's over.

Amber Heard and Johnny Depp are officially divorced following her withdrawal of the domestic violence petition she filed in late May. The actress will receive a reported settlement of $7 million — a million less than she requested — including attorney fees, according to TMZ's sources. In a joint statement, the "Rum Diary" co-stars and former lovers said: "Our relationship was intensely passionate and at times volatile, but always bound by love. ... Neither party has made false accusations for financial gains."

TMZ (and everyone else who can read) was quick to point out the line that states no "false accusations for financial gains" were made by either party (read: her), meaning Heard's domestic abuse claims against Depp very well sound kind-of-sort-of-OK-*probably*-definitely valid.

The statement was released following a series of bizarre events — including recently released footage of Depp using his wounded finger tip and blue paint to write "Billy Bob" and "Easy Amber" on a mirror in 2015. Billy Bob Thornton denies having cheated with Heard, calling the accusation "completely false."

Kim Kardashian did get butt injections — but not for the reason you think

Kim Kardashian West definitely has one of the most voluptuous bods in Hollywood. But, over the years her booty has come under a lot of serious scrutiny.

After years of constant speculation, the "KUWTK" star revealed that she did, in fact, get butt injections — but it's not what you think.

The reality star spilled on a recent LiveStream that she has to get periodic cortisone butt injections because of her psoriasis condition, "Every few years I get a cortisone shot. I just got one as my psoriasis was so bad in Vegas. That's a little unknown fact of me, I have to get cortisone shots every few years."

The 35-year-old has always been very open about her condition, she even spoke about it on a 2011 "KUWTK" episode. Apparently, the procedure spurred the butt-implants rumors because she was photographed with a literal dent in her butt.

"One of my neighbors was a dermatologist at Cedars [Sinai Hospital]. I go in there and he's like, 'There's a one in a billion chance that you will get a huge indent in your butt.' Of course I get a huge indent on my butt."

Kim K recalls the exact moment when the controversy over her rear end started: "There is a picture of me in Miami wearing an electric-blue dress, and another picture of me walking down Robertson. You see the indent. And I think that's when the rumors started: 'She's had implants.'"

Amy Schumer found comedy through tragedy

If you're looking for a light, funny summer read, comedian Amy Schumer's book of essays, "The Girl with the Lower Back Tattoo," is not it.

Though she does it with her usual self-effacing charm, Schumer details how her life has not so much inspired her comedy but driven her to it. She recounts painful moments like losing her virginity in a nonconsensual encounter at age 17, nearly losing her leg in a surfing accident and being in a physically and emotionally abusive relationship during her 20s.

But one of the most painful parts of life is when we discover our parents are only human. In the book, she recalls coming home at 13 to find her mother sobbing, then confessing to an ongoing affair with her best friend's married father. Schumer's own father had been battling multiple sclerosis since she was 12, and last year she talked about turning to comedy to keep her family's spirits up.

"I look at the saddest things in life and laugh about how awful they are, because they are hilarious and it's all we can do with moments that are painful," she writes. Check it out for laughs, and some tears.

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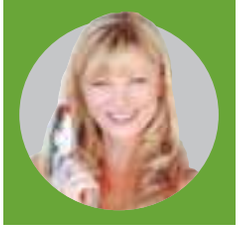
Another reason to be excited for 'Rogue One'

JENNA BUSCH

Geek Girl in Hollywood

Jenna Busch takes on the way pop culture snubs its female fans. For more columns, visit metro.us/jenna-busch as well as her site, Legion of Leia. (legionofleia.com)



Felicity Jones' Jyn Erso, hero of the forthcoming "Star Wars" film "Rogue One," out Dec. 16, appears to be a complex female character. LUCASFILM

There have been endless articles about the "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" trailer since it premiered last week. There are bound to be more with the arrival of the international trailer, which features brand-new footage. I'm not going to break the trailers down for you, as it's been done over and over. I do, however, want to tell you a different reason I'm excited about the movie. I mean, aside from the fact that it looks amazing. I mean, really amazing. I mean, I love this trailer more than warm oatmeal cookies with drizzled icing. But that's not the only reason why.

When I was a kid, I was introduced to Anne McCaffrey's book series "Pern." The world was full of dragons and riders; it totally sucked me in. The way I got in, however, was through a side trilogy, written about an at-the-time relatively minor character named Menolly. McCaffrey would go back to her world and tell minor stories and weave them in to give a wider picture of a larger universe. You got a look into not just the major characters, but also what else was going on and the lives of other people.

As a kid, seeing the original "Star Wars" trilogy, I wanted to know more. I wanted to know where regular people lived and where the rest of the Rebellion was. I wanted to know how many other worlds there were. I wanted to know about the "many Bothans" who died to give the Rebellion information. I wanted to know where Princess Leia got the Death Star plans before she gave them to R2-D2.

The announcement of "Rogue One" was childhood wish fulfillment. Just as the original "expanded universe" did for years, in the form of books, video games and comics, this will fill in holes. "Star Wars Rebels" and "The Clone Wars" have done the same. I'm dying to know everything about everything!

And then there's Felicity Jones' Jyn Erso, our hero. Yes, she's still one of the only ladies in a giant group of men, but she clearly kicks butt and isn't exactly perfect. It feels like writing a well-rounded female action hero is becoming the norm, as opposed to "tough chick in black leather." Jyn, Katniss, Rey — it's finally happening. To learn about another amazing and complex female character, one we didn't know about before (like we did with Ahsoka Tano, Hera and Sabine), and to see the trailer on my TV; to see the new planet Jedha, a U-Wing transport gunship, the size of K-2SO, Darth Vader; to see yet another part of my all-time favorite fantasy universe — well, it's pretty darn awesome.

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How to drive a chariot

For Jack Huston, the hardest part of "Ben-Hur" wasn't playing one of Charlton Heston's biggest roles.

MATT PRIGGE
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matt.prigge@metro.us

In the new "Ben-Hur," Jack Huston takes over the role once played by Charlton Heston, playing a Jewish nobleman out to avenge the friend (Toby Kebbell) who betrayed his family. PARAMOUNT PICTURES; GETTY IMAGES

It's no small feat to step into shoes already worn by Charlton Heston. Luckily for John Huston, he had a couple aces up his sleeve. For one thing, the English actor, 33, is Hollywood royalty: He's one of the Hustons, related to Anjelica, Danny, John and Walter. As luck would have it, he's known Fraser Heston, Charlton's son, since he was a kid. Before taking the lead in the new remake of "Ben-Hur," he asked Fraser for his blessing, and got it. And so here Huston is as 2016's own Judah Ben-Hur, the Jewish nobleman who seeks revenge on the friend (played by Toby Kebbell) who destroyed his family. That also means having to endure the film's centerpiece: a redo of the famed chariot race, which took three grueling months to shoot.

You have to play Judah Ben-Hur in two very different stages: When he's wealthy and fancy-free and when he's starving and ripped. It must be particularly rough not eating great food when you're shooting in Rome.

If you're in the galleys of a slave ship, you're not going to be eating three-course Italian meals. You're just rowing every day. So I went a little method and managed to drop down to 155 pounds. That's pretty nuts.

How did you do that?

It's kind of a funny story. The studio gave me a chef who's also a nutritionist. He was this wonderful Italian man named Giuliano, who loved cooking and had the best heart. And he was just in a state of disarray every day. He'd come in to hand the food out, and I could see he wanted to cry every time. He had to make me the most bland, boring food — proteins and veg and no salt. It was tearing him apart inside. He really wanted to cook me the most extravagant pasta dishes with the best wine. Instead he was under strict instructions not do give me any food with any flavor.

Speaking of pushing yourself to the limit, tell me about the chariot race. You already knew how to ride a horse coming into this, but that's nothing like driving four of them.

I was very comfortable and confident with horses; I could ride like I could walk. I thought that would give me a leg-up. But nothing really prepares you for a chariot — four horses and the end of your rein. There's a reason why we still refer to the power of cars as "horsepower." It's like something you've never felt before. And the horses loved it. They just want to run. They're basically racing each other. They don't even know they've got a 150-pound person behind them.

How long did it take you to feel like a pro?

We had about three and a half months of training, which starts with a seated car, then you progress to two horses and finally four. It's quite a rigorous process. The first day you're convinced you're going to die. Then the second day, funnily enough, it sort of becomes addictive. You don't think about anything when you're on that chariot, going around the track at full speed. When you're really tearing it, you are literally only focusing on the job at hand. You don't question yourself; you're not in that constant battle for your life. It's rather meditative. It's liberating to be free of one's ways.

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The Kors Edit is located at 384 Bleecker St. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICHAEL KORS

Michael Kors will curate your closet

The brand launches a new concept store on Bleecker Street.

TINA CHADHA
@TinaatMetro
tina.chadha@metro.us

Michael Kors knows the importance of keeping things fresh. The designer just gave the brand's lifestyle boutique — located at 384 Bleecker St. in the West Village — a major makeover.

Rebranded as the Kors Edit, the space will act as series of pop-up shops with a new theme each month, selected by the designer himself.

"The Bleecker Street store is like my lab where the newest ideas, concepts and personalized points of view will come to life" he says.

So what's Kors feeling for August? Athleisure. The concept store opened last week with the School of Sport theme showcasing sneakers and other sporty items.

For September, the location will get another transformation for New York Fashion Week. On the day Kors presents his Spring 2017 collection, fresh-off-the-runway items will be go on sale a few hours after the show.

Now that's of-the-moment fashion.

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To the wall

These peel-and-stick wallpapers are easier than paint.

MONICA WEYMOUTH
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Why haven't you considered wallpapering? The same reason you didn't consider making French toast this morning: It's messy, it's time-consuming — and real talk: a bagel does the job just fine. Between the scraping and the pasting, traditional wallpaper has more than earned its reputation as the worst weekend project ever. But as for these easy-up, easy-down removable papers, well, they might just have you rethinking that next coat of paint.

Retro bouffant design

How much do we love designer Kendra Dandy's retro bouffant design for Chasing Paper? So much.

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Tempaper

Bobby Berk's collection for Tempaper includes this warm-and-fuzzy conversation piece.

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Blik wallpaper

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			4 people	🧍🧍🧍🧍	$27,978 - $36,240
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1 bedroom	$810	31	1 person	🧍	$29,143 - $31,750
			2 people	🧍🧍	$29,413 - $36,250
2 bedroom	$979	15	2 people	🧍🧍	$34,972 - $36,250
			3 people	🧍🧍🧍	$34,972 - $40,800
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Applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than **October 18, 2016**. Late applications will not be considered.

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Русский

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Aaron Judge hit a home run in his first MLB at-bat. GETTY IMAGES

Young guns in Yankees' rebuild have produced strong results so far

Judge and Austin have been highly impressive.

ROBERT CRISCOLA
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It's been a season of transition for the Yankees, and that was on full display this past week. Alex Rodriguez played his final game in pinstripes on Friday, just one week after Mark Teixeira announced he'd be hanging up his cleats for good at season's end. Veterans like Carlos Beltran, Aroldis Chapman and Andrew Miller were also shown the door in recent weeks, all to make room for the bevy of prospects Brian Cashman has acquired while waiting for some onerous contracts to expire.

"The roster has been changing a lot," Cashman told The New York Times. "We've had a lot of changes with a lot of quality people that we've said goodbye to, and a lot of quality people we've been saying hello to."

Some of those greetings were reserved for Aaron Judge and Tyler Austin, who made their major league debuts in last weekend's series with the Rays. And the results were better than good; they were historic.

Judge and Austin each homered in their first major league at-bats while making back-to-back plate appearances on Saturday, marking the first time debuting teammates hit home runs in the first at-bat of their careers in the same game, let alone in back-to-back style.

"I don't think I could have asked for anything better," Austin told the Times after the game.

Judge added another home run on Sunday and drove in the Bombers' only RBI in Monday night's win over Toronto, but he's not letting the success go to his head.

"It's pretty crazy, but I'm just trying to do a job," Judge told reporters after Sunday's tilt. "Coming into Game 1, I was comfortable. We've got a great group of guys in this clubhouse, and they're gonna try and take care of me. It's been fun. Getting a chance to be up here and be part of the team is pretty exciting."

Judge has also won the confidence of his manager.

"We felt good about [Judge] when we called him up," Girardi remarked while addressing the media on Sunday. "We'll take it slow with him, too. He's a young player, and you want to make sure that he's making adjustments. So far he's looked really, really good. I've been real pleased with his at-bats, the adjustments, his patience, what he's swinging at."

But as with any baseball team turning it over to the young guns, there are bound to be growing pains.

Luis Severino, who showed tremendous promise in the Bronx last season, was demoted once again to Triple-A Scranton after a disastrous start against the Rays on Sunday that inflated his ERA to 7.19 in 12 starts.

"We're going to get this ironed out." Girardi said. "He's going to go down and start down there and work on stuff. It's frustrating to get sent up and down, but to be really successful at this level, you have to have a lot of mental toughness, and this is part of it."

Severino, trying to keep his chin up, told the New York Post, "It's been tough. I know a lot of players have been through this. I'm just going to keep working."

Take a long, hard look at Seattle's Christine Michael. GETTY IMAGES

FANTASY FOOTBALL: FIND MIDDLE GROUND

ADAM LEVITAN

FANTASY SPORTS

Adam Levitan is a Fantasy Sports columnist for Metro US. He is also a DraftKings analyst and co-host of The Daily Fantasy Football Edge podcast. @AdamLevitan

A lot of people will overreact to the NFL preseason and many others will tell you it's a meaningless waste of time. The truth lies somewhere in between.

The biggest mistake is drastically altering your rankings based on the miniscule sample size that is preseason performance. Ask anyone who bumped up Sam Bradford or Ameer Abdullah last year. That said, it's also a mistake to ignore usage patterns, depth chart signs and injury comebacks. Here are three important takeaways from the weekend:

Be like C-Mike

Everything coming out of Seattle has been roses for Christine Michael, as coaches have talked about an "awakening" from the uber-talented running back. It's perfect timing with Marshawn Lynch retired and former UDFA Thomas Rawls coming off a severe ankle injury. Michael, who ran as impressively as anyone in the preseason's first week, should now be considered a major threat to Rawls' early-down workload. The difference is Rawls goes in the fourth-round while C-Mike has gone undrafted in most standard leagues.

Throw up the X

Dez Bryant's foot woes and Tony Romo's shoulder issues led to a nightmare 2015 season. But let's not forget that this is the most dominant goal-line wide receiver in the history of the NFL. Bryant has scored 40 touchdowns in his last 49 regular-season games with Tony Romo and flashed his absurd physicality on another goal-line jump ball Saturday night. Dez, clearly over the injury, is a fine pick at the back end of the first round. He's especially strong in TD-heavy formats.

No fun for Funchess

Offseason signs suggested Devin Funchess had passed Ted Ginn and was ready for a second-year breakout. The preseason signs say that's not in the cards. Funchess ran strictly behind GInn against the Ravens, only playing on five of Cam Newton's 13 snaps and run-blocking in each of them. The Panthers' clear-cut first-string three-wide set is currently Kelvin Benjamin, Ginn and slot man Brenton Bersin. Without a change there, Funchess will go overvalued and Ginn will go undervalued in fantasy drafts.

NFL sleepers of the week

Each week, we will identify three players worth taking a shot on late in fantasy drafts:

1. Spencer Ware, RB, Chiefs – Jamaal Charles is 30 and coming off an ACL tear. Even if JC is right, Ware could still have a change-of-pace plus red-zone role.

2. Vance McDonald, TE, 49ers – Quietly averaged 3.5 catches, 43.6 yards and 0.5 TDs over final six games of last year. Now gets pace boost under Chip.

3. Chris Thompson, RB, Redskins – Has a vice grip on passing-down duties in an offense that will skew heavily toward the air. A PPR-only option.

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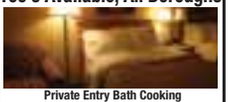

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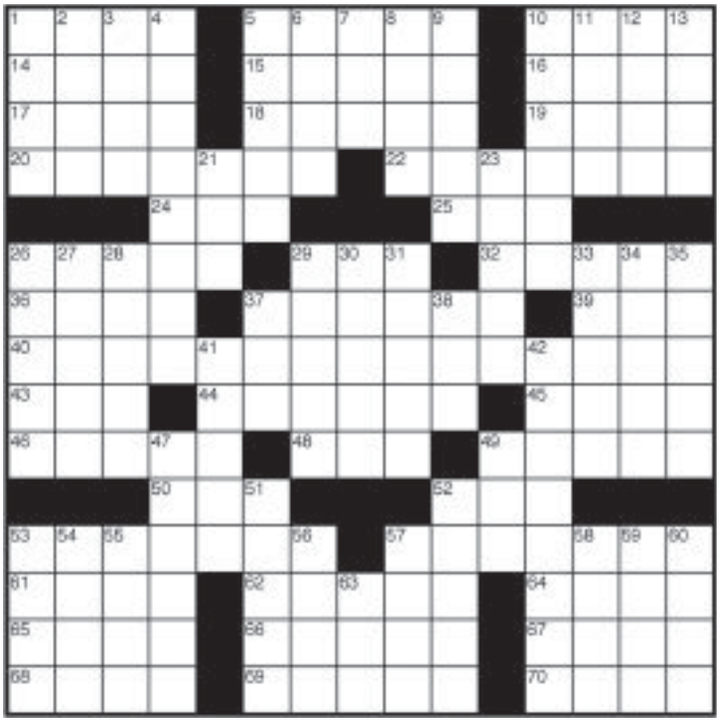
69 "The Eve of St.—"
70 Singer — James

Down

1 Answered a judge
2 Gael republic
3 Make turbid
4 Straightened out
5 Stormed
6 Mother lodes
7 Spanish gold
8 Coke or Pepsi
9 Punk
10 Nigeria's locale
11 — -a-brac
12 Cotillion
13 Suits to — —
21 Shucks!
23 Decade fraction
26 Really dislike
27 Gun, in a cop show
28 Diner's need
29 It has a crust
30 Ne plus --
31 Change the length
33 Oregon's capital
34 Soothe
35 Catalogs
37 Pickup's standard
38 Society column word
41 Galas
42 Protect, in a way
47 Fenced
49 Want-ad letters
51 Skylit courts
52 Hits the cuspidor
53 Furry accessory
54 Articulated
55 Mental fog
56 Yin complement
57 NYC theater award
58 Proofread
59 Landlord's income
60 "Beowulf," for one
63 Knot of hair



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easy

			6	4			9	
		9	7					
		6	1			8	4	5
8			4		9	3		
9								1
		7	2		1			9
3	8	2			7	9		
					8	1		
	5			2	4			

hard

	1	8	7					2
			2				1	
	2			9	1	7		
9		2				3	6	
	6						4	
	8	7				9		5
		4	6	5			7	
	7				9			
2					7	1	5	

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Aries You can make personal changes that will help you present and promote your agenda in a winning fashion. Your ability to wheel and deal will help you get ahead financially.

Taurus Don't feel obliged to take on someone else's problems or responsibilities. Stick to your own ventures and the people you can count on to contribute. Love is in the stars.

Gemini Too much of anything will lead to problems. Don't make promises you cannot keep or overspend on people trying to buy love and favors. A self-help program will pay off.

Cancer You'll find comfort in pursuing a creative hobby or getting involved in a project or course that will help you gain insight into what you want to do next.

Leo Personal change will allow you greater freedom. Handle situations responsibly, but don't lose sight of what's best for you. Let your intuition guide you and your emotions.

Virgo Get to know the people you are working with better. There is power in understanding those you are dealing with. Share little about yourself, but ask many questions.

Libra Networking will bring about positive changes in partnerships and the way you handle others. Confidence will give you an advantage over those who challenge you.

Scorpio If you think about how you earn your living or handle your cash, you will come up with a plan that will help you stabilize your personal and financial situations.

Sagittarius With a little finagling and enthusiasm you will excel, but don't be surprised if someone pressures you or challenges your ideas. Have an alternative plan in place to avoid delays.

Capricorn Don't hide facts, but don't offer information that will incriminate you. If you use unusual tactics to get what you want, you will discover interesting resources.

Aquarius Don't back down. Share your opinion and honor your beliefs. Once you bring about changes that ease your stress, your emotional outlook will improve.

Pisces Get hidden agendas out in the open so you can make a good decision based on facts, not on hearsay. Challenge and resolve any misconception you have. EUGENIA LAST

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